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Thesis

T H E P R O P H E T I C C O N S C I O U S N E S S

Submitted by

Raymond Francis White

(B.S., Kansas State Agricultural College, 1921)

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

1928.

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Prophecy
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INTRODUCTION

General Nature of Prophecy

Prophecy is by no means a simple phenomenon. It is the most profound movement of the human spirit; in many ways, it is mysterious. It contains various and even discordant elements. Prophecy is, essentially, a psychological phenomenon; a prophet was a speaker for God to man, one who interpreted the divine will in the light of the needs and conditions of his age. The prophet regarded himself as a messenger of Yahweh. He was conscious of a divine message; he was sure he was right: he spoke with authority. His clear, intuitive perception of moral and spiritual truth accounts, to a large degree, for the supreme position held by prophecy in the religious teachings of the world. He spoke to his own time more than to those of later centuries; he proclaimed more than he predicted. But, in the sense that they stand the test of experience, the fundamental notes of the prophets are true to life's deepest needs.

General Development of Prophecy.

Prophecy, as a psychological phenomenon, did not spring up full grown in Israel. Its growth was gradual, probably beginning about the time of the opening of the

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nation's history. More or less definite periods in the development of prophecy are discernible. There was a period of pre-literary prophecy which, in its earliest stages, was closely related to divination. Later in this period, prophecy took on the character of a group movement, represented by the prophetic bands. Then there was false prophecy, with which all Old Testament prophets had to contend. Later, there came the "golden age" or period, when prophecy was at its highest. This was followed by a period of decline in which the apocalyptic mode of expression came into ascendancy, and prophecy ceased to be a creative power.

Divination.

G.H. Toy defines divination as the process by which primitive man seeks to discover the will of the supernatural by observing phenomena. ¹ Man has always sought to learn the cause of past and present misfortunes, and to find what the future has in store for them, in order that they might know, at any given moment, the best course to pursue. Divination is the universal instinct of human nature, arising from man's daily needs, hopes and fears. The peoples of antiquity believed that the gods

¹ Introduction to the History of Religions, p. 206.

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PRE-LITERARY PROPHECY

The attitude of ancient peoples toward psychical and external events is different from our own. Primitive peoples make no sharp distinction between subjective and objective experiences. To them, a dream is regarded as a vision of something externally existent. There is no clear line between the natural and the supernatural. The whole environment consists, partly of the visible, and partly of the invisible, the practical distinction being that between the usual and the unusual. The result is that something, which we might explain as a purely natural phenomenon, would often have been taken by primitive man as the revelation or manifestation of some power of the mysterious world.

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would inevitably reveal their purposes; man's task was to discover the laws of phenomenal revelation. Ancient peoples sought to learn the will of their god through divination, visions, and dreams. Divination represents a higher stage of development than is found in those who practice magic; for divination seeks to learn the divine will in order to be guided by it, while magic seeks to compel the Deity to conform to the desires of man. Thus we see that divination is more reverent than magic, and more closely related to religion. There is a psychological relationship between divination and prophecy. Divination has its special functionaries into whose hands all its authority falls. There was a class of prophets called 'diviners'. They sought for information concerning the future, by investigation of combinations in various objects of nature. The most common of these objects were the entrails of animals, the flight of birds, the rustling of leaves, or the movement of sacred animals.

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the various signs was learned. The power of divination was sometimes the property of a clan or family, the power descending from father to son as the former instructed the latter. Frequently, the diviner performed various ceremonies for the purpose of bringing himself into relation with the divinity. The utterances of the diviner might be, and frequently were, given while in an ecstatic condition. In this state, he frequently spoke a language not his own. He frequently uttered words not understood by himself or by others. The interpretation of the diviner's words was sometimes left to the by-standers, or if they could give no interpretation, it was left to the diviner himself to give the interpretation upon his return to his normal mental state.¹ Though divination was practised in Israel, the diviner did not enjoy a favorable reputation, especially after the rise of prophecy.²

Oracles of a similar nature appeared at times in Egypt's later history, but there is no evidence that they made any deep impression upon the life and religion of that ancient time. More effective, although only temporary, was the truly prophetic reformation instituted by Amenhotep IV. The fact that its influence passed away so quickly and completely, proves

1. Toy, C.H. Introduction to the History of Religions, p. 407 f.

2. Deut. 18:9-14.

1. Kent, C.F. Sermons, Epistles, and Apocalypses of Israel's Prophets, p. 5.

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Prophecy in the Nations outside of Israel.

By the nations surrounding Israel, divination was depended upon as the means of learning the will of the deity. However, we find occasional exceptions to this statement; from the period of 2000-1788 B.C., comes a prediction delivered in the presence of an Egyptian king, by a prophet named Ipuwer. It tells of the coming overthrow of existing political and social conditions by foreign foes, and then proclaims the advent of a benign king who would deliver his land and people. Of him, men would say, "He is the shepherd of all the people; there is no evil in his heart. If his flocks go astray, he will spend the day to search for them. The thought of men shall be aflame; would that he might achieve their rescue. . . . Verily, he shall smite evil when he raises his arm against it."¹

Various Sibylline prophecies of a similar nature appeared at times in Egypt's later history, but there is no evidence that they made any deep impression upon the life and religion of that ancient time. More effective, although only temporary, was the truly prophetic reformation instituted by Amenhotep IV. The fact that its influence passed away so quickly and completely, proves

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clearly that the dominant forces in Egyptian religion were ceremonial rather than ethical and spiritual.

The story of Wen-Amon¹ indicates that prophecy was not unknown in nations outside of Palestine. This story dates from about 1100 B.C., and is one of the earliest known literary references to prophecy.

"A certain prince, Wen-Amon by name, made an expedition to Byblos in northern Syria, with the double purpose of making a commercial treaty and of introducing the worship of Amon, whose image was carried on one of his ships. The governor of Byblos, Zaker-Baal, was unwilling to comply with either request, and daily sent down to the harbor ordering Wen-Amon to return to Egypt. After nineteen days, the prince gave up hope, and one night made all preparations for returning the next day. But in the morning, a message came, saying, that at a festival on a previous evening, a certain young (man) noble of Byblos had fallen into an ecstasy and, speaking in the name of the Baal of Byblos, had ordered that the new god, Amon, and his servants, should be received and duly honored."²

Barton gives the following paragraph describing the prophecy. "Now, when he sacrificed to the gods. . . .

1. Barton, G.A. Archaeology and the Bible, 4th edition, p. 410 f.
2. Robinson, T.H. ., Prophecy and the Prophets, p. 33-34.

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1. Barton, G.A., Archaeology and the Bible, 4th edition, p. 210 f.
 2. Robinson, T., Prophecy and the Prophets, p. 35-36.

the gods seized one of his noble youths, making him frenzied, so that he said; 'Bring (the god) hither! Bring the messenger of Amon who hath him. Send him and let him go.'"¹ It is interesting to note that there is nothing in the incident as recorded in the sources to suggest that ecstatic prophecy was a new phenomenon at this time. This leads us to the conclusion that prophecy did not originate in Israel, but in some of the surrounding nations. It also leads inevitably, to the recognition of Israel's religious genius, as we see the force of the later spiritual and ethical prophecy in men like Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah.

Barton, in commenting on the story of Wen-Amon, points out the similarity between the conduct of the noble youth who became frenzied and prophesied, and Saul, who, "stripped off his clothes and prophesied. . . . and laid down naked all that day and all that night."² The attention paid to this youth by the prince of Byblos, shows that in Phoenicia, as in Israel such ecstatic, or frenzied utterances were thought to be of divine origin. The prophets of Baal must have been quite similar to this Phoenician prophet, for in the contest on Mount Carmel, they are represented as dancing

1. Barton, G.A. Archeology and the Bible, 4th ed., p411.
2. I Sam. 19:24.

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1. Barton, O.A. Archaeology and the Bible, 4th ed., p. 11.
 2. I Sam. 19:24.

about the altar, cutting themselves with swords and lances, until they had worked themselves into a delirium of frenzy.¹

Primitive man, with true intuition, firmly believed that the supreme power of the universe was ever ready and able to reveal himself. This led the ancient world to search constantly for means and men through whom the divine will could be definitely determined. In this intense and universal feeling or craving, is to be found the psychological basis of true prophecy and of all kindred institutions which preceded it. Among the Israelites, diviners and seers were looked to for revealing the will of Yahweh, even before the rise of prophecy.

PRE-LITERARY PROPHECY IN ISRAEL

Paraphernalia of Prophecy

It was believed by early Hebrews that certain trees at times gave audible expression to messages from the deity. This is illustrated by the story of the burning bush in Exodus, and by the references to the famous diviner's oak near Shechem. A rustling in the trees was looked upon as a sign of divine intervention.²

The diviner's cup was used frequently, as in the Joseph

1. I Kings 18:26-29.

2. II Sam. 5:24

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story. There was also the belief that the spirits of the dead sometimes returned and were able to reveal the secrets of the gods; this is well illustrated in the story of Saul's visit to the witch of Endor, whom he asked to call back Samuel for consultation and advice.¹ A good description of the paraphernalia of divination follows: "For the king of Babylon stood at the parting of the ways, at the head of the two ways to use divination; he shook the arrows to and fro, he consulted the teraphim, looked in the liver."²

These crude methods of learning the will of the gods required skillful interpreters to make clear the meaning of obscure signs. This fact gave rise to a great many sooth-sayers, astrologers, wizards, and diviners. They were the earliest forerunners of the prophets.

As men came to a more adequate understanding of the exalted spiritual nature of the Deity, they came to believe in the possibility of direct revelation through the mind of man.

Diviners.

Turning to Biblical sources still further, we find that the Israelites, during the years preceding the

1. I Sam. 28.

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organization of the monarchy, depended upon diviners and seers for revelation of the will of Yahweh. There is a close relationship between divination and prophecy. It is impossible to draw a distinct line or name a definite date, and say that before this time, all utterances were of the nature of divination, and after such a time, all utterances were of a prophetic nature. Evidently Balaam was a diviner of high repute.¹ Balak, king of Moab, sent messengers unto Balaam asking for his aid against the invaders. "Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me. . . . I know that he whom thou blessest is blest, and he whom thou cursest is cursed. And the elders of Moab, and the elders of Midian, departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and spake unto him the words of Balak."²

By the people of the surrounding tribes, Balaam was considered a diviner whose favor could be bought if the fee were large enough. But he could not be bribed. "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Jehovah my God."³ And later, when criticised by Balak, Balaam said emphatically, "The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak."⁴ Throughout the record, we find Balaam

1. Num. 22.

2. " 22:6-7.

3. " 22:18

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consistently declaring the will of God, refusing to curse Israel at the earnest plea of Balak. The distinction between divination and prophecy is to be found in the fact that the oracle of the diviner comes through the process of revelation, while the utterance of the prophet is delivered during the time when the spirit of Yahweh was present and in control of the mental powers of the prophet. In the prophetic books, even as late as those of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah, there are frequent references to the work of the diviner. Divination, false prophecy, and true prophecy were found side by side in Israel; however, divination was waning, while prophecy was gaining favor. "Those nations which thou shalt dispossess listen to sooth sayers and diviners; but thee, Yahweh my God, suffereth not so to do. A prophet from the midst of thy brethren will Yahweh thy God raise up to thee; unto him shall ye hearken." ¹

To sum up what we have said about divination and diviners, both in Israel and in other countries, we might say that divination was one of the earliest attempts of man to learn the will of the deity. It was reverential and more closely related to religion than was magic. The diviner had to be trained to read the meanings of the natural phenomena observed to obtain the information desired; while the prophets, developing later, and on

1. Deut. 18:14 f.

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a higher plane, gained his information through a spiritual contact with the mind of Yahweh. Prophecy outside of Israel rose but little above divination. It was practised in the nations around Israel, and as the forerunner of prophecy in Israel. As prophecy arose, divination fell into disrepute. The difference between the self-deceived or deceiving diviners of the primitive cults and the true prophets of Israel, is as great as that between darkness and light, yet the same innate universal human needs, the same beliefs, and the same God eager to reveal His truth to men, called forth the efforts of each.

"Now the rest of the acts of Hennesch, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of seers that spake to him in the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, behold, they are written among the acts of the Kings of Israel." *

During the time of the Judges and the early monarchy, the sacred lot and the ephod were used by priests and by seers as the chief means of ascertaining the will of Yahweh. Samuel was trained as a priest, and sometimes performed priestly functions, but he first came into the Old Testament story as a seer. His average seer was doubtless concerned with personal and private interests.

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SEERS

The most significant figures in ancient Semitic life were the seers, who were believed to possess divine knowledge, revealed to them, not through mechanical means, but directly from the Deity. They were the immediate forerunners of the prophets. Often, they were men of wide experience, keen insight, and with genuine spiritual intuitions, important as religious leaders, and as advisors of the kings. "Jehovah testified unto Israel and unto Judah, by every prophet and every seer, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers."¹ "Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and his prayer unto his God, and the words of seers that spake to him in the name of Jehovah, the God of Israel, behold, they are written among the acts of the Kings of Israel."²

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while Samuel, though occasionally giving attention to matters of personal concern, was primarily concerned with the welfare of the nation, and its loyalty to Yahweh. Kent suggests that Samuel's distinctive title "ro'eh", is possibly equivalent to the Babylonian Title "baru", a title of the divining priest. His duty was to inspect the entrails, and especially the liver of the sacrificial victims, and answer, on the basis of what he saw, the questions which were put to him.¹ It is significant that the earlier, as well as the later Biblical traditions, connect Samuel closely with the sanctuaries and sacrifices of ancient Israel. Following the oldest tradition, the people of Ramah were waiting for Samuel to come in order to begin their sacrificial meal.² It is also evident from the statement of Saul's servant, that like the divining priests of Babylonia, Samuel enjoyed the reputation of being able to settle questions, not only of public, but also of private interests. For this service he usually received some gift. There seems to be no doubt about the seer being able to work at his trade whenever occasion arose. For he was complete master of his own powers. He was usually called upon to describe events, past, present or future, which were hidden from the ordinary man. Matters concerning

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which the seer was consulted, were usually of a private personal nature , rather than those of national importance. We see an example of Samuel's divining power as he tells Saul of certain experiences that he will have during the day.¹

The term "ro'eh" comes from the Hebrew word meaning "to see, or to look"; if it originally described the priestly diviner, who answered questions put to him by looking upon the sacrificial victims, or by other objective signs, which the ancients regarded as revelations from the deity, the reason is clear why it early fell into disrepute among the Hebrews. The Hebrews considered their seers to be in direct communication with Yahweh, and able to hear His messages. They were recognized as being in intimate contact with Yahweh. They were known as as "men of God".¹

The title "seer" indicates that such an individual's experiences were visual as well as auditory. The seer received his messages either through a dream or trance, through his inner consciousness, or , as we might say today, through his subconscious mind. The seer possessed a mysterious capacity of mind, a "second sight", which enabled him to know facts which were hidden from ordinary minds. It was this peculiar talent which enabled Samuel

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to give Saul information concerning the lost asses.¹ This special ability seems to have been controllable, as people went to him expecting, upon payment of a fee, to receive answers to their questions without delay. This talent to reveal hidden facts was, in Samuel's case, especially, strengthened by priestly or other religious training. Naturally when articles were lost, a seer was consulted.

The seer did not consider himself inspired or filled with the Spirit of Yahweh, as was the case with the prophets. He did feel that he was in position to declare the will of God. He was conscious of being spoken to, and of being a spokesman for God.² When the children of Israel were seeking a king, Samuel, as their recognized counsellor, prayed; through his experience of prayer, he became convinced that it was God's will that the people should have a king. Then Samuel went before the people and told them the will of God as it had been revealed to him.³

There is a close relation between the office of seer and that of the prophet. They were both recognized as authoritative advisors to the king. In David's time both the seer, (Hozeh), and the prophet (na-bi), figure in public, rather than in private life. Gad was known

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"In connection with the account of Saul's first meeting with Samuel is found this statement: 'He who is now called a prophet (na-bi), was previously called a ro'eh', (commonly translated 'seer'). This is commonly taken as evidence that the functions of the ancient prophet were practically identical with those of the an-ro'eh, and that the difference was simply one of popular terminology. It is important to note, however, in the early sections of the books of Samuel, three distinct terms are used to describe Israel's early religious guides. Samuel is spoken of as the ro'eh, Gad is the royal hozeh, and Nathan is the Na-bi, or prophet. The care with which these terms are used, suggests that there was, originally, a clear distinction between them." ^{1.}

These facts lead to the conclusion that I Sam. 9:9, is a late addition to the text, and that there is a clear distinction between the seer and the prophet. Samuel clearly distinguishes himself from the nebi-im whom Saul is to meet.

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The close relationship between seers and prophets, is, however, well illustrated by Samuel's position at the head of the prophetic guilds.¹ Davidson expresses the opinion that the seers were absorbed into the class of the prophets, and that the name 'prophet' remained as the common designation of the isolated individual as well as of the member of the community.² After the time of Samuel, the will of Yahweh was asked chiefly of the prophets.³ The prophets never ceased to be seers; their faces were always turned toward the future. They stood in the council of Yahweh,⁴ and declared to men what he was about to do.

Samuel was, like the great prophets, an isolated personage. It is uncertain as to what extent the other seers were recognized as standing alone, but of Samuel it is true. "The author of the annotation, I Sam. 9:9 was familiar with the great prophets who were great, isolated personages, like Elijah and probably, the canonical prophets; he considered the seer, Samuel, to have been quite like one of these."⁵

1. I Sam. 19:20.

2. Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. IV. p. 110.

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POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PROPHECY.

"Prophet" in its earliest usage, implied, in a predominant, if not in an exclusive sense, military or political leadership. The prophetic movement in Israel was a patriotic, as well as a religious movement. The prophet was a statesman, due in a measure to the relationship conceived of as existing between Yahweh and the nation: they were thought of as being inseparably bound together; the welfare of Yahweh was thought to be dependent upon the well-being of the Hebrew tribes; what affected the nation would have a vital effect upon their God.

In the Book of Judges, Deborah is mentioned as a 'prophetess' who 'judged' or ruled Israel.¹ A similar statement is made concerning a prophet in the days of the Midianite oppression.² The 'prophet' then played a political role, assuming the leadership of the nation in a national crisis.

The same expression was used in narrating Gideon's call to military leadership, as was later used in describing or explaining the cause of prophetic utterances: "The Spirit of Yahweh came upon Gideon; and he blew a trumpet. . . ." ³. The narrative then relates

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how Gideon, following the leadership of the Spirit, led his people in a successful military campaign. Of Samson also, we read, "The Spirit of Yahweh came mightily upon him."¹ These men were not prophets, but men who, in critical times in history, upheld the reputation and honor of the God of the Hebrews.

It was the purpose of the prophets in the king's court to control the ruler, and guide the affairs of the kingdom in the interests of Yahweh.² Ahijah of Shiloh,³ was the prophet of the rise and fall of Jeroboam I. The young ruler⁴ was thinking out his plans of rebellion while out walking alone. He met Ahijah, whose purpose it was to consecrate and control the ambitious plans of the king. The prophet tore his new cloak into twelve pieces and gave ten of them to Jeroboam, promising him that on the death of Solomon, ten of the tribes of Israel should belong to him.

The prophecy of Jehu concerning Baasha foretold the fate of Baasha: that he and his house were to be destroyed because of the evil ways into which he, as king, had led the people.⁵

It seems that the prophet was an established member of the king's court as early as the time of David,

1. Judges 14:6,19.

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3. I Kings 14:2.

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for Nathan ¹ is present for criticism and counsel as occasion demands. Nathan, as God's messenger, delivered severe reproof without fear of the king. ²

Prophets like Nathan, Elijah, and Elisha, following the example of Samuel, directly interfered in the government of the State. Nathan determined the succession to the throne; ³ Elijah denounced the dynasty of Omri, ⁴ and Elisha set in motion the revolution that overthrew it. ⁵ Elisha was, to an unusual extent, the embodiment of the nationalistic spirit of the Syrian wars. But after the time of Elisha, the prophets withdrew from external national and party conflicts; they no longer headed revolutionary movements. However, they remained as truly statesmen as their great predecessors. It was inconceivable that they should cease to be politicians so long as the kingdom of Yahweh maintained the form of a state. They opposed, warned, or counselled state parties, according to the needs of the time. Hosea considered the monarchy impotent for good, if indeed it had not been, from the beginning, the source of all evil. ⁶

On the other hand, Isaiah, so long as the state was independent, warned Ahaz against involving his kingdom in the struggles of the nations. ⁷ He strenuously

1. II Sam. 7:1-17, 25; I Kings 1:8-45.

2. II Sam. 12:1-15.

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opposed foreign alliances.¹ The same principles guided Jeremiah and Ezekiel in the Chaldean age.² Later, the only weapon used by the prophets was the word of God as it had been revealed to them.

How did the Hebrew prophets differ from Hebrew statesman? The statesmen, kings and generals, viewed the upbuilding of the nation as an end in itself, while the prophets, "standing in the council of Yahweh," saw the nation as the vehicle for the development of the religion of Yahweh.

The psychological phenomenon of prophecy received a decided impetus with the rise of national consciousness in Israel. When kings came into power who were not in sympathy with prophetic ideals, -- kings who were mere national rulers, unprogressive or conservative in religion, -- then opposition arose between the prophets and the rulers. The prophets stood out as the inspired guardians of the kingdom of God in all its interests.

"And behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of Jehovah unto Bethel: and Jereboam was standing by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar by the word of Jehovah, and said, O

1. Isa. 30, 31.

2. Jer. 21:9; 38:2; Ezek. 17.

1. 1 Kings 13:1 f; 15 Kings 2:13; 4:9.

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PRE-LITERARY PROPHETS.

practically you use this heading on p. 9

In the time of Samuel, men called 'prophets' appear to have existed in large numbers and to have lived together in groups or communities. But preceding the rise of the so-called prophetic bands, or group prophecy, the phenomenon was confined to individuals. Occasionally, a person was seized with the Spirit of God and became the mediator between God and man. The prophet was often designated as the 'man of God'.¹ Such an unnamed prophet came to Eli with a message from God, a criticism of the evil conduct of Eli, the priest.² Through Samuel, the prophecy against Eli was fulfilled. Samuel, during his long lifetime, was Yahweh's representative in Israel.

Another 'man of God' was Shemaiah, who gave a message from Jehovah to Rehoboam,³ telling him not to fight against his 'brethren, the children of Israel'. 'Man of God', is the only name given the prophet of the following story, which also serves as an illustration of an early type of prophecy:⁴

"And behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of Jehovah unto Bethel: and Jeroboam was standing by the altar to burn insense. And he cried against the altar by the word of Jehovah, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith Jehovah: Behold a son shall

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1. 1 Kings 13:1 f.; 11 Kings 2:13; 4:9.
2. 1 Sam. 2:27 f.
3. 1 Kings 12:22-24.
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be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name: and upon
 thee shall he sacrifice the priests of the high places
 that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall they
 burn upon thee. And he gave a sign the same day,
 saying, This is the sign which Jehovah hath spoken:
 Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are
 upon it shall be poured out. And it came to pass, when
 the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he
 cried against the altar in Bethel, that Jeroboam put
 forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him.
 And his hand which he put forth against him, dried up
 so that he could not draw it back again to him. The
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 him again, and became as before. And the king said unto
 the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself,
 and I will give thee a reward. And the man of God said
 unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thy house, I
 will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread with
 thee, nor drink water in this place; for so it was
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1. I Kings 13:1-5.
2. I Kings 13:6-9.
3. I Kings 14:1-15.
4. II Kings 4:1 f; 5 f.
5. I Kings 13:10-12 f.
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charged me by the word of Jehovah, saying, Thou shalt

eat no bread, nor drink water, neither return the way thou camest. So he went another way and returned not by the way he came to Bethel."

From this narrative, and from the story of the visit of the wife of Jeroboam to Ahijah,¹ we see that men expected to pay the 'men of God' for their services; but the true man of God scorned material reward.² It is probable that Ahijah and others,³ in these early attempts to interpret the will of Yahweh, resorted to the powers of divination and to the skill of magic, such as were found in nations outside of Israel. These men of God were held in very high respect by the people.⁴ On one occasion, we learn that a certain person brought the first fruits of his harvest to set before the man of God,⁵ just as people did to the sanctuary of Yahweh.⁶

Each king had, as an advisory body, a group of seers or prophets. The number in these groups varied, but it is written that Ahab had at his command at one time about four hundred. As these men were dependent upon the king for sustenance, they were usually careful to foretell only those incidents which would please the king. Otherwise, they might lose their position, or even their life.⁷ A very great advance is seen when

1. I Kings 14:3;
2. I Kings 13:8,9
3. I Kings 14:1-18.
4. II Kings 4:1 f; 8 f.
cf. 6:1 & 9:1.

45. II Kings 4:42 f.
6. I Kings 12:21 f.
7. I Kings 18:4.

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| 2. I Kings 13:8, 9 | 46. | I Kings 13:21 f. |
| 3. I Kings 14:1-18. | 47. | I Kings 13:4. |
| 4. II Kings 4:1 f.; 8 f. | | |
| 5. 2 I Kings 3:1. | | |

an enlightened individual stands out from the group of his fellow prophets and delivers a message out of harmony with that of the rest, as in the case of Micaiah ben Imlah.¹ The court prophets, about four hundred in number, under the leadership of Zedekiah, prophesied a favorable outcome to a military campaign against Ramoth- Gilead. Miciah stood out in contrast to these prophets and declared, "as Yahweh liveth, what Yahweh saith unto me, that will I speak".² He refused to prophesy falsely, insisting that the battle would result in the death of Ahab, if he were determined to go ahead with his plans. Micaiah was willing to stake his reputation as a prophet upon the accuracy of his declaration: "If thou return at all in peace, Yahweh hath not spoken by me".³ Because of his loyalty to the truth which forbade his speaking in accord with the declaration with the four hundred, he was put in prison, and fed "with the bread of affliction, and with the water of affliction."⁴

Elijah and Elisha are typical examples of prophets who stood out, alone, for God in this early period. They are rightly regarded as the predecessors of the great literary prophets of the eighth and later centuries: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah and the others whose

1. I Kings 22. 12; II Kings 2:16.

2. I Kings 22:14.

3. I Kings 22:28.

4. I Kings 22:27.

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1. I Kings 22.
2. I Kings 22:14.
3. I Kings 22:33.
4. I Kings 22:27.

messages have been preserved for us in the Old Testament.

Elijah.

Elijah was raised up by Yahweh at a critical time in the history of Israel, to save the nation from lapsing into heathenism. A native of the wild, but beautiful mountain district of Gilead, he had a prophet's nurture in solitude. Lonely mountains and bleak deserts were congenial to his spirit. He learned to dwell familiarly on the sterner aspects of religion and morality.

Elijah's whole manner of life was meant to be a protest against a corrupt civilization. He was a man of the desert, entering the city only to deliver the message of Yahweh, and then be gone again. Men of his time thought of him as being borne hither and thither by the Spirit of Yahweh.¹ Like every other true performer, he upheld old principles; he was the personified conscience of the nation, bearing witness, perhaps, more by deeds, than by words.

The spiritual danger which Elijah was called upon to avert, arose out of a political alliance between Israel and Phoenicia, cemented by the marriage of Ahab and Jezebel. This involved the introduction of Baal worship, erection of a temple to Baal at Samaria², and

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the introduction and maintenance of many foreign priests,¹ Religious persecution followed in which many of the prophets of Yahweh were slain.² Baal-worship became the court religion, and but for Elijah, would soon have become the national religion. Elijah's ruling passion was jealousy for the Lord God of hosts.³ His spirit was aroused against all weak-willed persons who hesitated to declare their loyalty to Yahweh.⁴

Other phases of Elijah's work as a prophet are revealed in commands received from Yahweh, commanding him to take a hand in shaping the destinies of two great nations, by anointing Hazael to be king over Syria, and Jehu, king over Israel. He was also called upon to provide for the continuance of the prophetic order by anointing Elisha to be his successor.⁵

The episode of Naboth's vineyard,⁶ revealed the true character of the issues in Elijah's conflict against idolatry. It showed the people that, while idolatry went hand in hand with injustice and crime, the religion of Yahweh was a bulwark of righteousness and liberty.

Elijah's moral power was in the simplicity of his faith. He believed intensely in Jehovah, and lived heroically in the strength of his faith. Elijah recognized that he was indeed a messenger of Yahweh. He

1. I Kings 18:19.
2. I Kings 18:4-13.
3. I Kings 19:10.

4. I Kings 18:21.
5. I Kings 19:15-16.
6. I Kings 21.

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2. 1 Kings 18:4-13.	5. 1 Kings 19:15-16.
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went confidently into the presence of the king and delivered his messages with perfect assurance: "As Yahweh the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand". . . .¹
 In the confidence that he had a message from his God, he goes boldly before the individual who had done wrong, and proclaimed the truth divinely revealed: "The word of Yahweh" came to Elijah. He did not undertake to speak in his own name, on his own authority, but was in every case conscious of a divine commission.

He stands erect and haughty before kings; but in the presence of God, he wraps his head in his mantle, or crouches on the ground with his face between his knees.²

Stern, rugged by nature, he is led through an experience which awakens in him the tenderness that is to be found only in union with strength. His personal history, especially the story of the breakdown and restoration of his faith, brings him into touch with human beings in all ages.

1. I Kings 17:1.
 2. I Kings 18:42; 19:13.

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Elisha

✓ Elisha was the disciple and successor of the prophet Elijah. The call came to Elisha while at work in the field. On his way to Damascus, Elijah found Elisha at the plough, and threw his mantle over him,--a symbolic act by which he claimed him as his son, and invested him with the prophetic office. From that time, Elisha ministered to Elijah, never leaving him.¹ It seems that no word was spoken, yet Elisha understood the symbolic act. Elisha was amazed at the sudden call, bewildered by the necessity of making so great a decision. His hesitation was overcome by the consciousness that the call is indeed from God. Running after Elijah, he declared his willingness to follow him, desiring only to return and give his father and mother a farewell kiss. The ✓ mention of domestic ties, opens Elijah's eyes to the greatness of the sacrifice he had called Elisha to make. Elisha made his decision,--indicating his readiness to leave father and mother, houses and lands, and emphasized his act of self renunciation by a sacrifice that has a sacramental significance. Unyoking the oxen from the plow, ✓ using the goad and yoke for fuel, he roasted the flesh of the oxen and invited his people to a farewell feast.

1. II Kings 2:13.

1. I Kings 19:19-21.

2. II Kings 2:23.

3. II Kings 19:14-32.

4. II Kings 3:15.

5. II Kings 3:11-19.

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Then, bidding all farewell, he followed Elijah and ministered to him.¹ In II Kings 3:11 he is referred to as "Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who poured water on the hands of Elijah." This is an interesting note suggesting his devotion to the greater prophet.

Elisha is Elijah's spiritual successor, but he presents, in many respects, a sharp contrast to his great teacher. With his bald head, he did not escape unfavorable comparison with the prophet of the flowing locks.² Elisha was no son of the desert; he preferred human companionship. He is generally found in cities, living in Jericho among the sons of the prophets, dwelling in his own house at Samaria, or at Dothan.³ Elijah's power was derived from communion with God in the lonely mountains and valleys; Elisha was helped by strains of music,--"the hand of Jehovah" was upon him when the minstrel played.⁴

Elijah's short career was memorable for a few great and impressive scenes. Elisha's long life was marked by deeds of mercy. Both in public and in private, his life was one of incessant activity. He entered palaces, not as an enemy, but as a friend and a counsellor. The kings of Israel, Moab, and of Judah, came to him for advice in war.⁵ Even more than in palaces, he was welcome in

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2. II Kings 2:23.
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4. II Kings 3:15.
3. II Kings 3:11-12.

1. I Kings 19:12-21.
2. II Kings 2:23.
3. II Kings 16:14-32.

Prophetic Bands.

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As a prophet, Elisha had no new truth to proclaim. But he exercised a wide and lasting influence as the head of the prophetic guilds for more than half a century. Elisha's single aim was to complete the reform begun by Elijah,---to re-establish the ancient truth and repel heathen superstition. Elisha was a statesman, as well as a prophet, none intervened in the highest national affairs more boldly or more successfully than he. For many years, he eagerly watched every turn of events, and when the nation was ripe for revolution, he summoned the right man at the right time, and put an end to the domination of Tyre. After the fall of the dynasty of Omri, he was the trusted friend of the house of Jehu, the strength and inspiration of Israel in all its trials. Even in old age, his zeal was unquenchable. In the closing scene of his life, the patriot was as evident as the seer. His bequest to Israel was Hope.³

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1. I Sam. 19:20.

2. II Kings 2:21.

1. II Kings 4:9.

2. II Kings 2:21.

3. II Kings 13:15-19.

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Prophetic Bands.

In the time of Samuel, men called 'prophets', appear to have existed in large numbers, and to have lived together in groups of communities as at Ramah where Samuel himself lived.¹ Other localities, in the time of Elijah and Elisha are mentioned as residences of prophetic bands, e.g., Bethel,² Jericho,³ Gilgal.⁴ These groups are frequently referred to as 'sons of the prophets', that is, members of the prophetic societies. They were vitally interested in the political affairs of the country. In these groups, an intense feeling of opposition and resentment was created by the subjection of the Israelites to the Philistines. They went through the country with the more or less definite purpose of stirring up the people to the point where they would be willing to make any necessary sacrifice in order to throw off the yoke of the hated enemy. The groups were particularly prominent in times of national and religious crises, such as were brought on by the Philistine victories.

Davidson says that the prophets of Samuel's times and later were not individual enthusiasts, but were inspired by common sentiments, animated each other, and, as a society, reacted on the surrounding population.

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2. II Kings 2:3.
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- 1. I Sam. 19:20.
- 2. 11 Kings 2:3.
- 3. 11 Kings 2:6.
- 4. 11 Kings 4:38.

Their 'prophesying' was a kind of public worship, at the hinging place or sanctuary, to which they went up with pipe and song.¹ Throughout this early history of Israel prophets were numerous, though only occasionally did they have a distinctive message. Early prophecy was usually inarticulate.

Samuel stood in close relation to the prophetic groups, occasionally acting as their head.² It is clear that the prophets looked up to him and learned from him. No doubt, Samuel felt that the impulses that moved them, were common to himself. He was not ashamed to direct them and share in their activities.

Though we are not justified in speaking of Samuel as a prophet, it is clear that he was intimately acquainted with the prophetic bands. It was probably under his leadership that the earliest groups of prophets were organized into schools congregating in bands as at Ramah.³ The activity of the prophetic bands, as such, is not mentioned after the time of Samuel until some two centuries later, when they came into prominence under the leadership of Elijah and Elisha, in Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho.⁴ The members of the prophetic guilds were known as the "sons of the prophets".

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2. I Sam. 19:20.

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1. Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. IV, p. 109.
 2. I Sam. 10:26.
 3. Ibid.
 4. II Kings I.

religious enthusiasts, gathered about the ancient sanctuaries, expressed their zeal in music, song and frenzy. Their kinship with similar prophetic guilds among the Phoenicians was probably close. Members of the prophetic guilds wore a coarse hairy cloak as the garb of their order. They corresponded, in a way, to the 'begging friars' of a more modern day. Frequently, large numbers of them were kept by the king, as, for example, Ahab, for whom they prophesied whatever was pleasing to him.¹ They were not universally regarded with respect, as we can see in the incident at Jehu's camp, when one came from Elisha with the message to anoint Jehu king. The comment of Jehu's friend was, "Wherefore came this mad fellow unto thee?"² Although their prophetic message was heeded by some, still this attitude remained throughout the prophetic period.

Although no mention of the 'sons of the prophets' is made between the time of Samuel and that of Elijah, it is probable that the succession was maintained. Elisha acted as a counsellor to a prophetic group, and was recognized as more powerful than the average member of the prophetic guild. It was to Elisha that a widow of one of the 'sons of the prophets' came, asking advice, rather than to any of the other members

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2. II Kings 9:11.

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2. II Kings 9:11.

Ecstatic Prophecy.

of the group.¹ Elisha was acting as chief of the group when he provided food for them at a time of "dearth",² in Gilgal. Amos, a hundred years after the time of Elijah, was undoubtedly familiar with the prophetic schools.³ One of the most distinctive contributions of this pre-literary prophecy, was the development of a religious nomenclature which in the time of Amos, we find fully developed. We find in him, also, the prophetic mannerism and technique such as the phrases, "thus saith Yahweh", "the oracle of Yahweh", and "Thus the Lord Yahweh showed me". The prophesying of the bands partook of the nature of ecstatic utterances, with which we deal in the next chapter.

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1. II Kings 4:1-7.

2. II Kings 4:38-41.

3. Amos 7:14.

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Ecstatic Prophecy.

The most common phase of prophecy is the ecstatic state. This may be either natural, as in epileptics and persons who, through nervous derangement, have an abnormal intellectual and emotional development, or it may be artificial, where the nervous organization is excited by external stimulants, or the agency of evil spirits, or the divine spirit. In a rude and uncultivated age, epileptic and deranged persons are regarded as possessed by evil or by divine spirits.

Any psychological phenomenon which the East does not understand, is explained as being due to a 'Breathing'. That is to say, some being, usually divine, has breathed into the persons concerned, and has taken complete control over him: a breath or spirit has fushed upon him and manifests itself in abnormal behavior. Generally it is held to be the gods who are responsible for the condition, and had produced what we, today, call ecstasy. This naive possession theory of prophecy for a long time constituted the answer to the question, "How does Yahweh communicate his will through the prophet?" At a time when these psychic states of religious frenzy were generally regarded as evidence of spirit seizures, and when no other answer to this question was known or conceivable, primitive prophetism naturally yielded in

thought and acts to this theory. Probably because almost anyone could, by autosuggestion, or external stimulus, produce within himself the desired psychic state, and because the frenzied, dervish prophetism of Saul's time could no longer satisfy an age of higher culture, the authenticity of these emphatic states as evidence of divine inspiration came to be doubted.

"Ecstasy consisted of an attack or a fit which affected the whole body. Sometimes the limbs were stimulated to violent action, and a wild leaping and contortions resulted. These might be more or less rhythmical, presenting something of the appearance of a wild and frantic dance. At other times, there was more or less constriction of the muscles, and the condition became almost cataleptic. The vocal organs were sometimes involved, noises and sounds being uttered which might be unrecognizable as human speech. If definite words were uttered, they were often unintelligible. Face and aspect were changed, and to all outward appearance, the ecstatic became another man. Another feature was insensibility to pain, and the extravagant activities of the ecstatic frequently included the slashing of his own body and limbs."¹

1. Robinson, T.H. Prophecies and the Prophets, p.31.

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Ecstatics tended to be gregarious; usually they appeared and acted in bands. Ecstasy was held to be infectious. When Saul turned from Samuel, and met a band of prophets, the ecstasy fell on him and roused the wonder of all his acquaintances. His first military exploits were due to the fact that the 'breath of God' was upon him.¹ (This is a technical phrase for the access of ecstasy.) The prophets who were consulted by Ahab, appear all together and act practically as one man.² The prophets of Baal were four-hundred in number and worked together.³ Usually, the manifestations of the mob grew in intensity until one would stand out from the rest and give a common message by symbol, of speech, or by both. The case of Zedekiah among Ahab's prophets, is a case in point.⁴ The ecstasy was often spontaneous. There were several instances where certain means were used to induce it. One of these was the initiation of the kind of activity to which it led. Music was sometimes used.⁵ The prophets of Baal used wine to bring on or induce the ecstatic state. Ecstasy was confused with insanity. The Orient has always thought of madness as a divine visitation, and has regarded the

1. I Sam. 11:6.

2. I Kings 22:5-28

3. I Kings 18:20-29.

4. I Kings 20:11.

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3. I Kings 18:20-29.
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mad man as especially possessed by God. The "na-bi", whose message started Jehu's revolt, was called a madman.¹ In contrast to the seer, their social and moral standards were low. This is clearly indicated by the amazement of Saul's friends at his association with such disreputable people, and, at a later date, by Amos' indignant repudiation of any connection with the ecstatic prophets.² Yet, they were held to be the very mouthpiece of the God that had breathed into them, and their utterances and symbolic acts were regarded as the direct revelation of His will. It is something of a shock to realize that men like Amos and Jeremiah were not readily distinguishable, by their contemporaries, from the ecstasies whose symptoms resembled those of the epileptic or the insane.

In ecstatic conditions involving unconsciousness to the external world, the inner emotional and intellectual nature moves with great rapidity and freedom, and as in the dream, reaches solutions of difficult problems and discerns the issues of events far and near. As in the dream, so in the ecstatic state, there may be instinctive predictions and instinctive guidance through difficulties, or there may be entire failure.³ There is nothing in the ecstatic state as such, to determine whether it results from the divine influence or not.

1. II Kings 9:11.

2. Amos 7:14.

3. I Sam. 10:5/ 19:23.

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Experience and observation show that primitive religious beliefs are practically indestructible as long as the race survives. It is not surprising, therefore, that occasional instances of ecstatic prophecy are met with among the literary prophets, even after the collapse of the Hebrew nation. From the time of Isaiah onward, there is increasing evidence of a more rational interpretation of the means by which the divine will could be communicated. A moment's reflection will show that the possession theory of prophetism is so primitive that it lies altogether outside our modern categories of thinking. It tacitly implies that God is within the world and a part of it, being limited by time, space and matter. Neither our philosophical idea of transcendence, nor that of immanence, has any real point of contact with this conception of God which is essentially animistic and intra-mundane. Of God so conceived, it is impossible to say that he is absolute or omnipotent, or omniscient. This difficulty began to be felt by the later prophets, and it led to the gradual abandonment of the possession theory and ecstatic prophecy. Whatever the faults of the early ecstatic prophets might have been, they were recognized in their time as men in whom God dwelt, and through whom God spoke. Israel knew the prophet was a man of God.

Thus the prophet could be used to show Israel what God was really like. In spite of all his weakness and ignorance, the ecstatic prophet stood for Yahweh. He was above all else an enthusiast for his God. To Him, he owed his inspiration and to Him, he was obedient. "The ecstatic was the direct ancestor of the prophets whose words have been preserved in the Old Testament. "¹

There was a gradual development of prophecy from the early and primitive type represented by the bands of Samuel's time, on up through the time of Elisha, to Amos in whom we find the beginning of prophecy of a new type. The great reforming prophets found it difficult to obtain a hearing, due to their being confused with the professional prophets, who were far more numerous, yet lacked the high ideals and definite convictions of the reforming prophets. ² The true prophets condemned those faithless members of the professional schools of prophets whose interests were frequently mercenary rather than religious. Jeremiah says, "In the prophets of Samaria, I saw that which was sickening. "³

1. Robinson, T.H. Prophecy and the Prophets, p.
2. Skinner, John Prophecy and Religion,
3. Jeremiah 23:9-40.

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1. Robinson, T.H. Prophecy and the Prophets, p. 2.
 2. Skinner, John Prophecy and Religion.
 3. Jeremiah 23:2-40.

FALSE PROPHECY

False prophecy is an interesting phenomenon in the history of prophecy. No hard and fast line can be drawn between true and false prophecy.

Davidson says: "The fact that prophecy was the embodiment of a religious-national spirit accounts for false prophecy. When the spirit that animated the prophet pursued dominantly national ends, he was a false prophet. When the ends pursued were religious and ethical, the prophet was true, because in the religion of Yahweh, the national was transient, and the ethical was abiding."¹

The one outstanding difference between the true and the false prophets, was one of emphasis. The true prophets emphasized the 'religious' phase of a complex 'national- religious' ideal or concept. The false prophets emphasized primarily the national aspect of the ideal. Perhaps, it would be more accurate to speak of them as nationalistic prophets, rather than false prophets. They were not false in the sense of being wicked men; on the other hand, neither did they stand out as men of a peculiarly high spiritual calibre. Rather they stood on the same level with the common people of their time.

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"Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Hearken unto the
words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they
teach you vanity; they speak a vision of their own heart,
and not out of the mouth of Jehovah. They say continually
to them that despise me, Jehovah hath said, Ye shall h
have peace; and unto every one that walketh in the
stubbornness of his own heart, they say, No evil shall
come upon you. For who hath stood in the council of
Jehovah that they should perceive and hear his word?
Who hath marked my word and heard it?. . . . I sent
not these prophets, yet they ran; I spake not unto them,
yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in my
council, then had they caused my people to hear my words,
and had turned them from their evil way, and from the
evil of their doings. . . . I have heard what the
prophets have said that prophesy lies in my name, saying,
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I. Ezek. 13:24.

he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.
 . . . Behold, I am against the prophets, saith Jehovah,
 that steal my words, every one from his neighbor. Behold,
 I am against the prophets, saith Jehovah, who use their
 tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them
 that prophesy lying dreams, saith Jehovah, and do tell
 them, and cause my people to err by their lies and by
 their vain boastings: yet I sent them not, nor commanded
 them; neither do they profit this people at all."¹

Micah goes further in his analysis of the motives
 of the false prophets. He said that they spoke what
 men wished to hear, and for selfish ends. "When they
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 but whose putteth not into their mouth, they preach war
 against him."² Amaziah, the priest, seems to have formed
 his conception of prophets as a whole from this class
 of false prophets. He said to Amos: "O, thou seer, go,
 flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat
 bread, and prophesy not again any more at Bethel;
 for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house."³

In the person of Micah, we have an example of the
 true prophet, saying, as he does, "As Jehovah liveth, what
 as Jehovah saith unto me, that will I speak."⁴

1. Jer. 23:16-32.

2. Micah 3:5-11.

3. Amos 7:13,14.

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In the case of the true prophets, it was their criticism of the national policy, rather than their preaching of the ethical nature of Yahweh, that brought about their persecution.¹

It was no longer on the crowds of ecstatics that men relied for the divine message. It was, rather, the single independent speaker whose words they held to be due to the direct inspiration of Yahweh. The prophet was always looked upon as the one who declared the will of Yahweh to the people, the speaker of God to man. Other names for the prophets, "men of God", "servants of Jehovah", and "watchmen", "messengers of Jehovah", confirm this conception of the functions of the prophets. The prophet was the one who proclaimed and interpreted the divine will in the light of the needs and conditions of the age.

Prophetic Credentials.

In the great Hebrew prophets, there was a personal sympathy between the prophet and God. They were men whose lives and thoughts were determined by personal fellowship with God, and by intelligent insight into

1. Jer. 25:9,10; 36:29; I Kings 22; Amos 7:10 f. and the Spirit of God was upon the prophet and he was the victim of its power. The prophet was sensitive to

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LITERARY PROPHECY

Introduction

A century after the time of Ahab and the prophet Micaiah, the individual prophet had become a familiar figure. It was no longer on the crowds of ecstasies that men relied for the divine message. It was, rather, the single independent speaker whose words they held to be due to the direct inspiration of Yahweh. The prophet was always looked upon as the one who declared the will of Yahweh to the people, the speaker of God to man. Other names for the prophets, "men of God", "servants of Jehovah", and "watchmen", "messengers of Jehovah", confirm this conception of the functions of the prophets. The prophet was the one who proclaimed and interpreted the divine will in the light of the needs and conditions of the age.

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Prophetic Credentials

In the great Hebrew prophets, there was a personal sympathy between the prophet and God. They were men whose lives and thoughts were determined by personal fellowship with God, and by intelligent insight into his purpose. There were times of inspiration when the Spirit of God was upon the prophet and he was the victim of its power. The prophet was sensitive to the

impressions from the world of the unseen, but he was not always under the effect of the inspiration. His divine illumination all too soon faded into the light of common day. His teachings showed a personal experience, and flashes of insight prepared for by communion with God and long meditation upon the ethical relation of Yahweh to Israel.

The Hebrew prophets were men of extraordinary genius; they showed a remarkable familiarity with the history of their nation. They were patriots in the best sense. They show a wide acquaintance with the religious and political affairs of neighboring states; they were statesmen, but above all, they were, as we have already noted, pious men whose religious experience was intense, whose devotion was profound, and whose ethical character was exalted. The true prophet rises above his age and race like a great mountain peak, enveloped in the eternal mystery of divine revelation. However, he rests squarely on earth, for human needs are the basis of his work and teachings. So the reforming prophets of Israel, with their intimate knowledge of the past, and their familiarity with the present, were urged to a keen apprehension and a vivid realization of the future. Having seen clearly, they were men of action. They were interested in

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the future, but were primarily men of their own day, who saw conditions as they were, and tried by every possible means to influence their fellow men to do the will of God. Their primary task was the proclamation of ethical principles, but their activity was not limited to the setting forth of spiritual truth. They were interested in the whole life of the nation, a nation which they recognized as having a real religious significance. Israel, as a nation, was from the first confronted with a series of grave political, social and moral crises. These experiences furnished the background and inspiration for the work of the great prophets.¹

It was from these men of God, who had studied the relationship of Israel to Yahweh, who had a wide knowledge of the history of their nation, that there came the first half-conscious identification of Yahweh's word with the deductions of the prophets' thinking. Reason and reflection finally began to assume a large place in prophetism, although it appeared in the rhetorical and figurative dress peculiar to an earlier period of prophecy. This entire course of development illustrates the gradual

1. Kent, C.F. The Sermons, Epistles and Apocalypses of Israel's Prophets. p.10.

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elimination of superstition and irrationality from religion. *the people.*

In this age of struggle and stress, new thoughts were filling the minds of the prophets. At first, Yahweh, as God and ruler of his people, rejected dynasties, and, by the prophets, overthrew them.¹ Later, the prophets were convinced that Yahweh had rejected the nation and it was doomed to destruction. The prophets struggled with the thought and its implications. Isaiah spoke often of the remnant that should be preserved from destruction. Deutero-Isaiah, however, with his conception of the universality of Yahweh's power, gave voice to the conviction that had been growing among the earlier prophets, that the religion of Yahweh might endure, though the nation be destroyed.

The new prophetism was a national-religious movement, with the emphasis falling more and more on the religious aspect of it. The prophets, in their religious emphasis, stressed the thought that the most important consideration was that the people should be faithful to God. During this age, the prophets attained a much more lofty conception of the spiritual and ethical character of God than had previously prevailed; and because of

1. Hosea 13:11.

Nature and Office of the Prophet

their lofty conception of God, they criticised the moral laxity of the people.

Thus the great Hebrew prophets, equipped through personal communion with God, with a wide knowledge of their nation's history, with genius in political affairs, and profound reasoning powers, were not only theologians and ethical teachers, but also social reformers, statesmen and men of affairs. Through their own activity, as well as by personal influence and spoken word, they sought to their exalted ideals effective in the life of the nation.

The prophet whom pictured the conceptions entertained concerning him, was 'man of God'. It was applied to Samuel,¹ to Elijah,² and to Elisha,³ as well as to others,⁴ and to Jeremiah.⁵ Moses was often spoken of as a 'man of God', and certainly there were prophetic elements in his personality, though he was more truly a statesman than a prophet, in the sense that the word 'prophet' later came to be used. The title 'man of God', implies a close relationship with God, such as might be expressed today in saying, 'He was filled with the Spirit of God', in the sense that he was dominated by God. The prophet was near to God.⁶ The prophet was a holy man. The Shunammite built a little

1. Jer. 26:15
2. Jer. 18:18
3. 1 Sam. 9:15
4. 1 Kings 17:18.

5. 11 Kings 2:13
6. 1 Kings 18:22
7. Jer. 26:4.
8. Amos 3:7; Jer. 23:22-23.

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Nature and Office of the Prophet

Of greatest interest and value is the prophet's idea of himself. The prophet himself, and the people to whom he spoke, believed that he spoke the word of Yahweh.

When threatened with death, Jeremiah declared, "For of a truth, Yahweh hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears."¹ The popular conception was, "The word shall not perish from the prophet."²

Designations Equivalent to 'Prophet'.

I. One of the earliest and most common names applied to the prophet which pictured the conceptions entertained concerning him, was 'man of God'. It was applied to Samuel,³ to Elijah,⁴ and to Elisha,⁵ as well as to others,⁶ and to Jeremiah.⁷ Moses was often spoken of as a 'man of God', and certainly there were prophetic elements in his personality, though he was more truly a statesman than a prophet, in the sense that the word 'prophet' later came to be used. The title 'man of God', implies a close relationship with God, such as might be expressed today in saying, 'He was filled with the Spirit of God', in the sense that he was dominated by God. The prophet was near to God.⁸ The prophet was a holy man. The Shunamite built a little

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Designations Equivalent to 'Prophet'

I. One of the earliest and most common names applied to the prophet which pictured the conception entertained concerning him, was 'man of God'. It was applied to Samuel, ³ to Elijah, ⁴ and to Elisha, ⁵ as well as to others, ⁶ and to Jeremiah. ⁷ Moses was often spoken of as a 'man of God', and certainly there were prophetic elements in his personality, though he was more truly a statesman than a prophet, in the sense that the word 'prophet' later came to be used. The title 'man of God', implies a close relationship with God, such as might be expressed today in saying, 'He was filled with the Spirit of God', in the sense that he was dominated by God. The prophet was near to God. ⁸ The prophet was a holy man. The Shunammite built a little

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Jer. 28:15 | 2. 11 Kings 2:15 |
| 3. Jer. 18:18 | 3. 1 Kings 12:22 |
| 4. 1 Sam. 9:15 | 4. Jer. 38:4 |
| 5. 1 Kings 17:18 | 5. Amos 3:7; Jer. 23:21-28 |

room for Elisha, because he was a holy man of God.¹
 Holiness, likewise, is suggestive of nearness to God.
 The designation, 'man of God', suggests the ethical
 basis of prophecy and the religious character or nature
 of the prophet.

The prophets are recognized as men authorized to
 pass moral judgment on their contemporaries; for example,
 Nathan criticised David,² and Elijah pointed out to
 Ahab his sin.³ The utterances of the literary prophets
 are mostly words of condemnation for the moral laxity
 on the part of the nation and its leaders. Jeremiah goes
 so far as to say that the mark of a true prophet is, that
 he expresses condemnation on the life of his time. That
 is, the fact that he is able to recognize it, and has
 courage to utter burning words of condemnation against
 existing wrong, that in itself indicates his truly
 prophetic character.⁴ The depth to which moral con-
 siderations entered into the prophet's own conception of
 prophecy is seen in Isaiah 6:5f, and in Micah 3:8.

The prophet's call, which resulted in his becoming
 a 'man of God', was more than an appointment to an office,
 as we think of it today; it was rather a call to a type
 of life,---a God filled life. Prophecy, for the man of
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life. No true prophecy was possible without communion with God. This is especially clear in the case of Jeremiah, sometimes referred to as the "prophet of personal piety", in whom prophecy and piety merge into one another.

II. The prophet was commonly designated as "servant of God", or "of Yahweh". It was a name given to prophets as a class,¹ as well as to individuals: Elijah,² Isaiah,³ and to others.⁴ The title was frequently applied to Moses. The service rendered by the prophet was usually of a public character, service in the interests of the kingdom of God. The prophet is named frequently as the "messenger of Yahweh".⁵ This designation is found mostly in the later writings,⁶ but in the case of all the prophets, there was a distinct consciousness of having been SENT. "Go and tell this people,----" ⁷ The prophets were as sure of a commission, i.e., as sure of being sent to the people, as Moses was sure of being sent to Pharaoh.

III. The prophet is spoken of as "Interpreter".⁸ This appellation describes the prophetic offices in relation to history and to God's providence. God spoke in events, and the prophet interpreted God to man.

1. II Kings 9:7.

2. I Kings 18:26.

3. Isa. 20:3.

4. I Kings 14:18; II Kings 14:25.

5. Isa. 44:6.

6. Hag. 1:13; Mal. 3:1

7. Isa. 6:9; Jer. 26:15.

8. Isa. 43:27.

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2. 1 Kings 18:26.
3. Isa. 20:3.
4. 1 Kings 14:18; 11 Kings 14:23.
5. Isa. 40:6.
6. Hag. 1:13; Mal. 3:1.
7. Isa. 6:9; Jer. 23:18.
8. Isa. 40:6.

through the revelation of Himself in the events of history. God's attitude or disposition toward Israel was conceived of as expressed in history, and as reflecting itself in the mind of the prophet. The prophet was, in a sense, the conscience of the nation. History was thought of as a moral current; the prophet stood in this current, felt whence it came, and whither it was flowing. Events furnished the occasion of the prophet's intuition, but his insight was not limited by these events.

There are several passages belonging to different dates, which indicate different aspects of the prophetic office, and the nature of the prophet. It is recorded, "Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, except He reveal His secret unto His servants the prophets."¹ Jeremiah² speaks of the prophet as one who stood in the council of Yahweh and knew His purpose.³ Yahweh revealed His mind and purpose to the prophets, and did so particularly in reference to the future. When great events were about to happen, events involving the destiny of the people, the keen mind of the prophet felt their approach, and stood forth to announce them. Thus Amos and Hosea heralded the downfall of the Northern Kingdom;

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2. Jer. 23:22.

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1. Amos 3:7.
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Micah and Isaiah saw the coming storm of Assyrian invasion; Jeremiah noted the passage of the Empire of the East to the Chaldeans, and realized that the downfall of Judah was near. Davidson says, "The conception of a living God in moral fellowship with men, involves in it prophecy having reference to the future."¹

Yahweh put His words into the prophet's mouth, who spoke them in His name.² The words of the prophet were as much the words of Yahweh as if Yahweh had spoken them with his own voice.³ All the prophets regarded themselves as the mouth of Yahweh.⁴

Amos, the herdsman, felt called upon to raise his voice against their evils which he saw in Israel, even though it brought him into conflict with both political and religious leaders. He saw the herdsman on every hand. Palaces were built of hewn stone,⁵ some of them panelled with ivory,⁶ the pretentious summer houses and winter houses, with their extravagant interior finish,⁷ all were to him evidence of an instability which threatened extinction. He could not help seeing and hearing the drunken revelries,⁸ Amos saw the immorality,⁹ practised without shame, and the oppression of the poor and needy.¹⁰

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1. Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol.IV, p.113.

2. Deut. 18:15-19.

3. Num. 12:6-8.

4. Isa. 30:2; 31:1.

5. Amos 6:4, 6.

6. Amos 2:7.

7. Amos 3:6-7.

8. Amos 3:15.

9. Amos 3:12.

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THE PROPHETIC CALL

The prophet's position was a personal one. He received an individual call; he did not, as a member of a cast, inherit the prophetic office. The prophets were "raised up"¹ from various classes : from the priesthood, Samuel, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; from the king's court, Isaiah; from rural life, Misah; from shepherd life, Amos.

The period in which Amos arose was one of great external prosperity , while Jereboam was king of Israel and Uzziah was king of Judah. The luxury of the rich, made possible by increased wealth, met the eyes of the herdsman on every hand. Palaces were built of hewn stone,² some of them panelled with ivory,³ the pretentious summer homes and winter homes, with their extravagant interior finish,⁴ all were to him evidence of an instability which threatened extinction. He could not help seeing and hearing the drunken revelries.⁵ Amos saw the immorality ,⁶ practiced without shame, and the oppression of the poor and needy.⁷

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1. Deut. 18:15; Amos 2:11.
2. Amos 5:11.
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The period in which Amos arose was one of great external prosperity. While Jeroboam was king of Israel and Uzziah was king of Judah. The luxury of the rich, made possible by increased wealth, met the eyes of the herdsmen on every hand. Palaces were built of green stone, some of them panelled with ivory. The pretentious summer houses and winter homes, with their extravagant interior finish, all were to him evidence of an instability which threatened extinction. He could not help seeing and hearing the drunken revelries. Amos saw the immorality, practiced without shame, and the oppression of the poor and needy.

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2. Amos 2:11.
3. Amos 2:15.
4. Amos 3:12.
5. Amos 6:5, 6.
6. Amos 2:7.
7. Amos 2:6-7.

"Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jereboam, the king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely shall be led away captive out of his land. Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O, thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house.

"Then answered Amos, and said, to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman and a dresser of sycomore trees: and Jehovah took me from following the flock, and Jehovah said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel, Now, therefore, hear thou the word of Jehovah."¹

In spite of the general disregard, in Israel, of human and divine law, Amos found a wide-spread feeling of righteousness, due to careful observance of the external forms of religion. The prophet conceived of this deplorable religious moral and social condition as being due to the false conception of the character of Yahweh. The prophet's great aim was to give to his hearers a more adequate knowledge of God. They needed

1. Amos 7:10-16.

"Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam, the king of Israel, saying, 'Where hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely shall be led away captive out of his land. Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O, thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house.'"

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a new conception of the character and nature of God, and of His relation to Israel and surrounding nations. This demand was supplied by Amos and his contemporaries in the prophetic office. They pointed out that Yahweh is a righteous and holy God, and that the nation is guilty in His sight. His very character compels Him to punish them; He uses the Assyrians as an instrument of punishment. Emphasis on the divine righteousness and holiness was contended to counteract the internal religious danger; emphasis on Yahweh's use of the Assyrians did not prove the superiority of their deities, but rather the unique power and supremacy of Yahweh.

In the thought of Amos, Yahweh is the only truly great and powerful God. Amos teaches that God is a person capable of every emotion, volition, and activity of which a person is capable. The power of Yahweh may be seen in the acts of creation, in the control He exercises over the forces of nature, and over the nations of the earth. The most important element in the message of Amos, is the constant emphasis on the righteousness of Yahweh. He takes no delight in superficial or external worship; he deals with Israel, as with other nations, according to ethical principles; His supreme demand being, "Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream".¹

1. Amos 5:24.

Hosea's call was different from that of the other prophets in the uniqueness of his message, as well as in the expression of the commission.¹ God led Hosea to realize, through his own love for an adulterous wife, the great and intimate love of God for apostate Israel. The distinctive element in Hosea's teaching is his emphasis on divine love; this emphasis colors the prophet's whole outlook. He was the first to teach religion in terms of love. Hosea was convinced that the religious, moral and political apostasy of the nation made judgment inevitable; but the love of Yahweh is unquenchable; even in His wrath, He will remember mercy. Though the nation must die, it will live again. The supreme goal of Hosea's aspirations was the re-establishment of a fellowship of life and love that will make it possible for the divine purpose to be completely realized.²

"Although anticipated by Amos and Hosea, in many of his leading doctrines, and excelled by both Jeremiah and the great prophet of the Exile, in depth of personal experience, and width of religious outlook, Isaiah was, nevertheless, the greatest of the Hebrew prophets, by the strength of his personality, the wisdom of his statesmanship, the length and unbroken assurance of his ministry,

1. Hosea 1:2; 3:1.

2. Hosea 2:14; 19; 20; 14:1-3.

the almost unaided service which he rendered to Judah at the greatest crisis of her history, the purity and grandeur of his style, and the influence he exerted on subsequent prophecy."

¹

Isaiah was well qualified to deal with the problems of his time. His one outstanding characteristic was strength of character, borne of intense conviction and lofty motives. The key to his activities is found in his inaugural vision, during which he saw Yahweh as a God of infinite holiness and majesty. Amos had emphasized the righteousness of God; Hosea, his loving kindness, while Isaiah saw the source of these qualities in the supreme holiness of God.

"In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, sitting upon the throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim, each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain did he fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips: for mine eyes have

1. Smith, G.A. Hastings Bible Dictionary, "Isaiah".

seen the king, Jehovah of hosts; Then , flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he touched my mouth with it; and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sins forgiven. And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go. . . . Then said I, Lord how long? and he answered , Until cities be waste without inhabitants, and houses without man, and the land become utterly waste. "1

As a result of his lofty vision of God, Isaiah realized that the relation of God to man was determined , on the one hand , by the divine character, and on the other hand , by the attitude of man to God. After his vision of the character of Yahweh, it is not strange that his eyes were opened to the moral uncleanness of the people; nor is it strange that his ideals and standards of living were raised. For forty years, he tried , in the face of untold obstacles , to lift the nation to the height of his new ideals.

"With this sublime vision of God, he knew no sphere of life where the presence of Yahweh might not be felt , or where the battle for righteousness might

1. Isa 6:1-12.

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not be fought; and it was his sole ambition to fight this battle until the entire national life should be regenerated, until worship should be so unselfish and honest that all might be offered as a holy and acceptable service to Yahweh." ¹

Through the years of his prophetic activity, Isaiah was certain of his divine call to the prophetic task. He was convinced that he was speaking the words of Yahweh. "For Jehovah spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me. " ² From the time of his inaugural vision, he was conscious of being God's man.

Micah's confidence of his right to speak for Jehovah may be seen in the following quotation: "But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and of judgment, and of might, and declare unto Jacob his transgressions, and unto Israel his sin." ³

His assurance that he stands in the councils of Yahweh is indicated thus:

"But as for me, I will look unto Jehovah; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. . . . When I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness Jehovah will be a light unto me. . . . He will bring me forth to the light and I shall behold his righteousness." ⁴

1. Eiselen, F.S. The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament Vol.I, p.121.
2. Isa. 8:11.
3. Micah 3:8.
4. Micah 7:7-9.

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1. *Isaiah, 1:3. The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament*
- Vol. I, p. 121.
2. *Ibid., 48:11.*
3. *Ibid., 3:8.*
4. *Ibid., 7:7-9.*

We may think of Jeremiah as the true type of Hebrew prophet. He was a man of sublime faith and courage.

"The tenderness and compassion with which Jeremiah watches the approach of the nation's doom, reminds one of Hosea;¹ this tenderness made him, as it did Hosea, in a peculiar manner, the messenger of the outraged love of Yahweh."²

Yet, the most significant thing about him is not his public message to Israel, but his own personal religious life.³ He has been called the prophet of personal piety. Jeremiah's conception of religion as a personal relationship to God, suggests that religion is not a matter of race, but is as broad as humanity itself. However, it was not until the time of Deutero-Isaiah that this latter thought was developed.

Jeremiah testified to the reality of his mission in this vivid portrayal of his prophetic call:

"The word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee; I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord Jehovah! Behold, I know not how to speak; for I am a child. But Jehovah said unto me, Say not I am a child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee, thou shalt go."

1. Jer. 4:19; 8:18, 21, 22; 9:1.

2. Eiselen, F.C. The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament, Vol. I.

3. Jer. 9:23, 24. "Because of them;"

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 I. Jer. 1:4-10; 2:1-28; 3:1.
 2. Bissell, F.C. The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament,
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 3. Jer. 1:6-10; 2:1-28; 3:1.

child; for to whomsoever I shall send thee, thou shalt go, and whatsoever I shall command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid, because of them; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah. Then Jehovah put forth, and touched my mouth; and Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth: see, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms to pluck up and to break down, and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant. "¹

He was criticised for speaking unfavorably against the city of Jerusalem. His defense shows very clearly his conviction that he was Jehovah's messenger. "Of a truth, Jehovah hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears. "²

We can see Jeremiah's high conception of the relation of the prophet to his God in his condemnation of the false prophets in the very centers around him. ³ His grief at their apostasy is voiced thus: "Concerning the prophets, my heart within me is broken, all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of Jehovah, and because of His holy works. "⁴

Sometimes, Jeremiah became discouraged with the great weight of circumstances against him. ⁵ "O, Jehovah, thou

1. Jer. 1:4-19.

2. Jer. 26:15.

3. Jer. 23:9-40.

4. Jer. 23:9.

5. Jer. 20:14.

hast persuaded me and I was persuaded; . . . I am become a laughing stock all the day, every one mocketh me. . . The word of Jehovah is made a reproach and a derision all the day. And if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is in my heart, as it were, a burning fire shut up in my bones, I cannot contain. "¹

Jeremiah was sure that he stood in the council of Yahweh.. "Jehovah is with me, as a mighty one, and a terrible, therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail; they shall be utterly put to shame." ²

Jeremiah was both a messenger of doom and a messenger of hope. As a messenger of doom, he prophesied the fall of Jerusalem. As a messenger of hope, Jeremiah saw beyond the night of calamity and distress, the dawn of a brighter day. Jeremiah's great contribution to prophecy was his conception of the deeply spiritual nature of true religion, immediate personal relationship between God and the individual. ³

1. Jer. 20:7-9.
2. Jer. 20:11.
3. Jer. 1.

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Ezekiel was a priest as well as a prophet. In his utterances, we see a marked change in prophetic thought, for he had the tastes and interests of a priest. Ezekiel considered ritual offenses as serious as those of a moral nature.¹ Ezekiel, the prophet of the Exile, found it impossible to gather large crowds, so in place of public discourse, he adopted the practice of dealing with individuals or with small groups. He became pre-eminently a pastor, caring for those who came under his immediate charge. He thought of himself as a watchman appointed by God to give warning to the house of Israel.²

At the time Ezekiel received his commission, the voice of Jehovah spoke unto him, saying, "Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak with thee. And the Spirit entered into me and he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet; and I heard him that spake unto me. And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to nations that are rebellious, which have rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. And the children are impudent and stiff-hearted: I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, thus saith the Lord Jehovah, And they, whether they will hear, or

1. Ezek. 22:6-16.

2. Ezek. 3:17; 33:7.

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1. Ezek. 23:6-16.
 2. Ezek. 3:17; 35:7.

whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. And thou Son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, thou briars and thorns are with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house, for thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious. But thou, Son of man, hear what I say unto thee; be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that which I give thee. And when I looked, behold a hand was put forth unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; and he spread it before me; and it was written within and without; and there were written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe. And he said unto me, Son of man, eat that which thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth and he caused me to eat the roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness. And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them."¹

1. Ezek. 2:1- 3:5.

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The assurance of Ezekiel's divine commission was strengthened by the vividness of his recurring visions.¹ Frequently he was conscious that "the hand of Jehovah was there upon him".² The extravagant language of his visions reveal a growing trend toward apocalyptic expression.³

Summary.

The prophets were men who towered above their contemporaries in purity of character, strength of intellect, sincerity of purpose, and intimacy and communion with the divine. A sublime conception of the character of their God resulted in a vital appreciation of the divine ideals of righteousness. With flaming enthusiasm, born of keen spiritual insight, and intense conviction, they sought to impress the truth burning within them upon the hearts and consciences of their less enlightened contemporaries. They believed that the interest of their God was co-extensive with human life and interests. They felt that their activities as His representatives should be equally comprehensive. Consequently, they felt constrained to interfere in every sphere of human life, and to insist on obedience to the divine will in all human relationships. They were not

1. Ezek. 8, 9, 10, 11, 40.

2. Ezek. 1:3.

3. Ezek. 38, 39.

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content with being religious teachers in any narrow sense, they were bold and consecrated preachers of right living sane and courageous social reformers, as well as shrewd politicians and statesmen."¹

Prophecy was thought of as a necessary part of the religious life. The prophets took the place of the priests. The discipline into which prophecy fell, is expressed by Jeremiah: "And it shall come to pass that, when any shall yet prophecy, then his father and mother that beget him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of Jehovah; and his father and his mother that beget him shall thrust him through with a prophetic sword. And it shall come to pass, . . . that the prophets shall be despised, every one of his vision when he prophesieth; neither shall they wear a hairy mantle to deceive: but he shall say, I am no prophet, I am a tiller of the ground; for I have been made a fool and free of youth. And one shall say unto him, What are these words between thine arms? Then he shall answer, These will which I was wounded in the house of my friends." The Book of Apocalypses.

Eiselen, F.C. The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament, p.107.

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1. Jer. 18-20.

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RELATION BETWEEN HEBREW PROPHECY AND APOCALYPSE

The Decline of Prophecy

With the publication of Deuteronomy in 621 B.C., prophecy gradually died out. Prophecy was thought of as unnecessary, for the written word took the place of the prophetic voice. The disrepute into which prophecy fell, is expressed by Zechariah:

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The Rise of Apocalypse.

When prophecy became impossible, its place was taken by apocalypse. The transition is not marked by a distinct line which would enable us to say, "Prophecy ends here ,

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The Rise of Apocalypse

When prophecy became impossible, its place was taken by apocalypse. The transition is not marked by a distinct line which would enable us to say, "Prophecy ends here,"

and apocalypse begins there". The change in the spirit of prophecy appeared as early as 592-576, in the character and work of Ezekiel. Even in Amos, the first of the great literary prophets, we find expression and conceptions, such as "the Day of Jehovah", which assumed great prominence in the time of the apocalyptists. The anonymity of the prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah is another of the indications of the trend toward apocalypse. The apocalyptic element in the work of Trito-Isaiah (460-445 B.C.) is quite conspicuous. And with Joel, (about 400 B.C.) the predominant character of the literary expression became definitely apocalyptic, rather than prophetic.

Another prominent factor in the rise of apocalypse was the non-fulfilment of prophecy. This had been a matter of difficulty and perplexity to the later prophets themselves. So the prophecies of the earlier prophets were re-edited by the later. But the apocalyptist is primarily concerned with the advent of the Messianic kingdom.

The important apocalyptic writings of the Old Testament are: Joel, Isaiah 24-27, Zechariah 9-14, and Daniel. One characteristic of apocalypse is its pseudonymity, so there can be no discussion of a definite personal call, as there was in the case of Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Though the names of the apocalyptists are

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withheld, we can see in their writings, evidences of a transcendent faith in the goodness and greatness of God; and in the ultimate triumph of the rule of Yahweh. In regard to their message, they felt an assurance equal to that of the prophets who had preceded them. They filled the place for the people of their time that the prophets had filled in earlier days. It was the influence of the apocalyptists, that kept the people true to Yahweh in the dark days of exile and in the trying times of post-exilic distress.

Comparison of Prophecy and Apocalypse.

There are several points of similarity between prophecy and apocalyptic; both are radically ethical; both aim to express the will of God as revealed to them; both use, in the main, the same methods. Prophecy and apocalyptic differ in several interesting respects. Prophetic and apocalyptic eschatology differ radically. "The eschatology of the prophets dealt only with the destiny of Israel, as a nation, and the destinies of the Gentile nations; it had no message of light or comfort for the individual beyond the grave. For all men, ultimately, whether of Israel or of the Gentiles, Sheol, the unblessed abode of the shades, was the final and everlasting habitation. Every advance on this heathen conception we owe to apocalyptic. The belief in a blessed

1. Quoted practically verbatim from A. A. Charles' Religious Development Between the Old and New Testaments, Chap. I.

future life springs not from prophecy, but from apocalyptic. . . . The Christian conception and expectation of a new heaven and a new earth is derived, not from prophecy, but from apocalyptic. The prophetic expectation of a blessed future for the nation was materialistic. In the apocalyptic school this hope underwent a gradual transformation till the hopes of the righteous were transferred from a kingdom of material blessedness to a spiritual kingdom, in which they were to be as angels and become companions of the heavenly hosts. In the kingdom of God, as expected by the Old Testament prophets, though righteousness was to be supreme, there was in their conception a large element of materialism. The emphasis was on the community, on its security, permanence and happiness. The consideration of individual righteousness was not thought of. Another point of contrast is seen in this, that while prophecy and apocalypse occupy to some extent, the same province, the scope of apocalypse is incommensurably greater."¹

Nature of Apocalypse.

Apocalypse is practically unlimited either as to time or space. The apocalyptists were the first to grasp that all history, human, cosmological, and spiritual

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was a unity. Apocalyptic^{was} predominantly interested in the future and tended to despise the present, with its trials and tribulations. Apocalypse was characteristically pseudonymous. Finally, apocalypse teaches that the end of the present order of things will be catastrophic;¹ all apocalyptic is allegorical and symbolical in method, and highly fantastic in style. The most prominent conception of the apocalyptists had to do with the Day of Jehovah, also called the 'Day of Judgment', which immediately preceded the ushering in of the kingdom of God.²

The apocalyptists recognized a difference between themselves and the prophets of an earlier age.³ The prophets and apocalyptists differed in their views concerning the transcendence of God. The former felt themselves to be completely one with God. He was ever present and living in them. The latter thought of God as more and more transcendent. Direct personal intercourse with God ceased and angels stepped in between, and became the messengers from God to men.

One can not properly evaluate apocalyptic without a realization of the fact that it was from the apocalyptic side of Judaism that Christianity was born. Christianity

1. Isa. 26:20-27:1.

2. Ezek. 38, 39.

3. Zech. 13:2b-6.

is deeply indebted to the apocalyptists for several conceptions, which today are held as essential Christian doctrines. The belief in blessed future life, we owe to the apocalyptists, not to the prophets. Old Testament prophecy contains not even a hint of it, while the apocalyptist made it a fundamental postulate of his belief in God. In Daniel, as also in the apocalyptic section of Isaiah,¹ belief in individual immortality is stated as an unquestioned truth. The Christian conception of the kingdom grew out of the apocalyptic teaching of a new heaven and a new earth.

Summary

In the concluding paragraphs of this section, I shall briefly characterize the distinctly apocalyptic sections of the Old Testament, and indicate something of the abiding value of the apocalyptic messages. In Joel, prophecy mingles into apocalyptic. This book admirably illustrates the intimate relation which existed in the prophetic mind between the sorrows and disaster of the present, and the coming day of Jehovah: the one is the immediate harbinger of the other. The theological value of the book, lies in its clear contribution to the conception of the day of Jehovah.

1. Isa. 26:19.

1. Chap. 9-14.
2. Zech. 14:9.

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Zechariah¹ dealt with the events leading up to the final triumph of the kingdom of God in a group of loosely connected apocalypses. In general, he taught that the hostile nations surrounding nations would perish while Jerusalem would escape unharmed. It is not fair to the author, however, to overlook the statement: "And Jehovah shall be king over all the earth".² This might well lead us to characterize the author as "the seer of Jehovah's universal reign".

The author of Isaiah 24-27. might well be called the seer of judgment, resurrection and immortality. In these chapters, the resurrection of the dead appears for the first time as a postulate of faith, though here it is only the resurrection of the pious Jews. The latest and greatest of Biblical apocalypses is the book of Daniel. It presents a philosophy of universal history. The great Gentile kingdoms are shown as phases in a world process whose end is the Kingdom of God. The immediate purpose of the book was to strengthen the faith and hope of the Jews amid all their persecution, to inspire within them undying patience and courage. The book is of tremendous value, for it helped to keep alive the faith of the Jewish race, and to preserve for humanity

1. Chap. 9-14.

2. Zech. 14:9.

the inestimable heritage which had been intrusted to Judaism.

The apocalyptists sustained men through their interpretation of history, their assurance that the hand of God was guiding the destiny of the nations. The underlying spirit of the apocalypse was always profoundly prophetic. The apocalyptic messages were suited to the age to which they were delivered. The Jews were passing through a time of severe testing. Always, in a dark hour, apocalypse flourishes. Man's weakness is emphasized by contrast with God's strength, in which is our hope. In times of stress, man must rely on God. Such is the message of the apocalyptists for our own day.

man as the revelation, or manifestation of some power of the mysterious world. Any peculiar physical or psychological state could be ascribed to the invasion of a spirit or demon. In ancient Arabia, the 'jinn', or evil spirits, were made responsible for every thing abnormal. But especially for madness, passion, the inspiration of the seer, the poet or the musician.

The primitive Hebrew's interest and attention were aroused by the abnormal facts and conditions of life. It was these that demanded explanation; the normal facts of his experience were taken for granted. But when the normal man did something, of which neither he, nor any

PROPHECY AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL PHENOMENON

The Psychology of Inspiration

The attitude of ancient religions toward both psychical and external events is different from our own. Primitive peoples make no sharp distinctions between subjective and objective experiences. A dream is regarded as a vision of something externally existent. There is no clear cut line between natural and supernatural. The whole environment consists, partly of the visible, and partly of the invisible, the practical distinction between the two being that between the usual and the unusual. The result is that something which we would explain as a purely natural phenomenon, might have been regarded by the primitive man as the revelation, or manifestation of some power of the mysterious world. Any peculiar physical or psychical state could be ascribed to the invasion of a spirit or demon. In ancient Arabia, the 'jinns', or evil spirits, were made responsible for every thing abnormal. But especially for madness, passion, the inspiration of the seer, the poet or the musician.

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In lower types of prophecy, these elements had predominated, one else deemed him capable, he was considered abnormal; his actions challenged attention, and demanded explanation. Their explanation was, that the "ruach", (wind, breath, or spirit of Yahweh), had taken possession of, or had inspired him. All psychological abnormality in Israel was attributed directly to the "ruach of Yahweh". They knew only two causes, God and man. Thus the inhabitants of Israel who were psychologically abnormal, were inspired by Yahweh. 'Inspiration' was taken to mean, 'a breathing into', as a breath may be blown by one into another. All great men of all races have been popularly believed to have been inspired. Exceptional persons, whether warriors, hunters, artisans, athletes, philosophers, law-givers, poets, prophets, or priests, of all races, have been looked upon as recipients of the favor of the gods.

We are here concerned with inspiration as seen in the Hebrew prophets, therefore our attention will be turned to them. We are primarily concerned with what we think of as the true prophets of Israel. The distinction between the 'true' and the 'false' prophets was never determined alone, by the psychological processes involved in their experience. The value of the prophet's word has been measured, rather, by its ethical significance. In the greatest of the prophets, the cruder phenomenon of frenzy and ecstasy ^{largely} disappeared.

In lower types of prophecy, these elements had predominated, but the great reforming prophets spoke in quite a natural manner, and scarcely claimed for themselves, any greater sense of passivity and subordination to external influences, than do many modern writers.

In studying the prophetic consciousness, the question in our minds is, "What kind of feeling was it which came upon the prophets, and led them to say, The Spirit of the Lord came upon me? What kind of feeling did they experience when they were under pressure to speak?" They were certain that God was speaking to them. Was their state of mind one that can be identified with, or compared to any known state of mind among ourselves? Is there any phase of the prophetic state about which we can say, " This is an effect that only the spirit of God could have produced. " 1

Spirit-possession was a rather common phenomenon among primitive peoples. The man possessed by a spirit was said to be inspired. 'The Spirit of the Lord' came on Samson, ² Saul, ³ Gideon, ⁴ Jephthah. ⁵

When one is seen performing what is beyond man to do, or what is beyond him in his natural condition, he is said to be, 'another man'. He is seized and borne

1. Davidson, A.B. Old Testament Prophecy
2. Judges, 14:6.
3. I Sam. 11:6.
4. Judges 6:34.
5. Judges 11:29.

onward by a power external to himself, -- the Spirit of the Lord is upon him. One under the influence of the spirit is carried away by the impulse, sudden, and often uncontrollable. The terms, describing the Spirit's operation, suggest suddenness and violence. It 'comes upon',¹ 'comes mightily upon',² 'falls upon',³ it 'descends' and 'rests on',⁴ it 'puts on' a man as a garment',⁵ and 'fills' a man.⁶ Another expression with similar significance is, "the hand of the Lord" comes upon the man and overpowers him.⁷ These expressions describe the experience of the prophet as phenomena visible to an onlooker, or experienced by the prophet, but do not indicate the point at which the Spirit operates. In the case of the literary prophets, comparatively little is said of the 'Spirit'. Hosea speaks of the prophet as the man of the spirit⁸ Isaiah uses 'the Spirit of Yahweh', as equivalent to the 'mouth of Yahweh'.⁹ Micah declares himself full of power by the Spirit of Yahweh'.¹⁰ Such references to Spirit are rare in later prophecies, doubtless because the violent excitations usual in earlier prophesy had practically disappeared.

1. I Sam. 19:20-23.

2. I Sam. 10:6, 10.

3. Ezek. 11:5.

4. Num. 11:25-26.

5. Judges 6:34; II Chron. 24:20.

6. Micah 3:8.

7. Ezek. 1:3; II Kings 3:15; Isa. 8:11.

8. Hosea 9:7.

9. Isa. 30:1, 2.

10. Micah 3:8.

The prophetic state was different at different periods. There are two periods distinguished by no sharp line of demarcation; (1) the early, or pre-literary, and (2), the period of literary prophets.

In the first, mental excitation was common; though the degree of excitation might vary, self-consciousness was not lost, memory of experience remained. Revelation in this period often took the form of dream and vision. Dreams and visions are not identical; though they differ chiefly in the degree to which the senses are dormant, and consciousness of external surroundings is lost, and reflective control over mental operations suspended. The prophets regarded their dreams and visions as objective, in the sense of being caused by God.¹ Both dreaming and seeing visions are forms of thinking. Davidson, commenting on this point suggests that the phraseology current all through the prophetic age originated in the early period of prophecy, and is descriptive of the phenomena of the period. The phraseology includes 'see vision', 'hear the word of the Lord', etc.

" In this early time, prophets did 'see', and 'had' visions; they did 'hear' the word of the Lord, just as one sees persons and things, and hears words audibly in a dream. The terms truly describe the mental experiences

1. Amos 7:1 f.

The prophetic state was different at different periods. There are two periods distinguished by no sharp line of demarcation; (1) the early, or pre-literate, and (2), the period of literate prophets.

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"In this early time, prophets did 'see', and 'hear' visions; they did 'hear' the word of the Lord, just as one sees persons and things, and hears words audibly in a dream. The terms truly describe the mental experiences

of the prophet, and are not mere figures of speech".¹

Concerning the second period, Davidson says that the best idea of the mental state of the prophet, in this purest stage of prophecy, can be gained by considering the condition of the religious mind in earnest devotion, of a rapt spiritual communion with God. Even the earliest prophets interceded with God.² The compulsion of which the prophets speak, is not to be thought of as any thing physical. The constraint to which Amos refers, "the Lord Jehovah hath spoken; who can but prophesy?"³ is only moral. When Jeremiah speaks of the word of Yahweh as a fire in his bones compelling him to speak, when, to avoid persecution, he had resolved to be silent, there is here again, only that moral constraint, such as was felt by the apostles in the early days of the Church, or by one of the present time who has earnest and deep convictions.

"A conscience sensitive to the presence of moral evil in the life around them, was an essential part of the prophet's endowment, but it did not work in isolation from their other faculties."⁴

Prophetic declarations were not necessarily of equal inspirational value. They consisted of grades

1. Davidson, A.B., Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. IV, p. 115.

2. Amos 7.

3. Amos 3:8.

4. Skinner, John Prophecy and Religion, p. 53.

and shades of utterances. The prophets grasped God's revelations more or less perfectly according to their readiness for receiving them. Thus Isaiah could speak of God in history, and in the counsel of the nations, because he was experienced in statecraft. Hosea could reveal God as infinite love, because he, himself, had loved deeply. Jeremiah could declare the spirituality of religion as independent of temple or priest, because he himself had deeply experienced, himself, the spiritual life. Deutero-Isaiah could speak of suffering for others, because he had suffered the agony of the captive. God reveals himself most where human experience is fullest and noblest, because, there, conditions for inspiration are most favorable. "As for me, I am full of power, by the spirit of Jehovah, and of judgment, and of might to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin." 1 Thus Micah unhesitatingly declares his consciousness of possessing the indispensable equipment for the prophetic office, which his opponents lack; hence his message is of a totally different character from theirs. Micah's inspiration and satisfaction come from his God-given sense of right, while the false prophets are inspired by the people's gifts. The task of Micah and all true prophets, was, to denounce and expose sin, and to hold up, in contrast with it, the higher conceptions

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of God and duty. This gives us a suggestion as to the psychology of Prophecy. The truths enunciated by the prophet were not imposed upon him from without, but were the choicest possessions of his own inner spirit, the product of his divinely illuminated experience, observation, and meditation upon the practical problems of life.

"The essential thing in inspiration is the increase in power, whether of feeling or insight, or capacity for action. Days of preparation preceded experiences and productions which we call inspired. Poetical inspiration does not come, except to those who read and love and study poetry." ¹

A common conception of inspiration has been that there is a sudden increase of the resources of the personality from the outside; in fact, it has been believed that the inspired person was only a channel, or medium, through which the power of God was being poured, while the human personality was perfectly passive. Such was the basis for the claims to divine authority which were often made by the prophets. It was not, the prophet declared, his own message, but the message of God which he spoke as God's mouthpiece. The above explanation

1. Strickland, F.E. The Psychology of Religious Experience, Chap.7, p.146.

has great religious value, but is not to be taken as a sound psychological explanation of inspiration.

From a psychological point of view, inspiration may be described as an intuitional process. In the background of the prophet's mind, there were resources which were suddenly made available in the moments of inspiration. Out of the prophet's own past, the glowing message was born. There were new elements; the present situation,---and emergency, a national crisis, or a keen realization of departure from certain great loyalties, or indifference to moral ideals. The prophet was one who always felt intensely. But the fire of his fervor was the result of long brooding; and the appeal to ethical ideals poured forth from previous seasons of silence and meditation, like pent-up waters bursting their bonds. The prophet was steeped in God-life. As he was full of God, he spoke fully of God. In the white heat of his moral intensity, ideas which in cooler hours were only logically connected, are fused together.

The demands of God were as a burning fire in the prophet's

bones.¹ "He saw and heard things of God foreign to the multitude. "Surely, the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, except He reveal it unto His servants, the prophets."²

This consciousness of having the mind of God, is the ultimate secret of true prophetic inspiration. The basis of all genuine inspiration is a mind in tune with the infinite, and moral sympathy with the principles upon which the universe is founded, the consciousness of a personal fellowship with God who reigns over all and reveals His purpose to His servants, the prophets.

The true prophet, at the moment of inspiration, feels himself swayed by forces which seem to come from beyond himself. Thus, from a psychological point of view, we can realize why the prophet, surprised by the rush of his own burning words and ideas, and the strange tumult of his feelings, cries out that it is not he who speaks, but God, who speaks through him. And this is true, for in spite of all previous training and experience, the prophet could not, without this divine enthusiasm, have so swiftly summed up the great meanings, and brought to their conclusion, great movements which were, perhaps, already underway, but needed the quickening touch of the inspired personality to give life and power.

1. Jer. 20:9.

2. Amos 3:7.

The Prophetic Consciousness

The prophet was conscious of a divine message. He was sure that he was right. He spoke with authority.

"The cardinal fact of the prophetic consciousness, as it is displayed in Amos and his great successors, is the absolute conviction of the divine call, mission and message. This conviction is expressed in the reiterated

formula of introduction to the prophetic message : 'Thus saith Yahweh',"¹ The prophet is convinced that he stands in the council of Yahweh, and that Yahweh will do nothing, "except he reveal his secret unto His servants, the prophets."²

By fidelity to the highest truths, the prophet becomes the 'mouth of Yahweh'.³ This conception is well illustrated in the account of the relation in which Aaron stood to Moses, a spokesman to the people.

This thought should not lead us to a mechanical theory of inspiration, for in Hebrew psychology, independent qualities, psychical and moral, belonged to the different organs, such as the mouth, so there was a real contribution to the divine message made by the prophet himself as the 'mouth of God'. The message of

1. Robinson, H. Wheeler, The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament. p 113.

2. Amos 3:7.

3. Jer. 15:19.

each prophet is distinct, and as characteristic as are the circumstances of his call, both in language and in thought, the human agent is visible.

Three elements contribute to the prophetic consciousness: (1), a remarkable moral and spiritual character; (2), unusual psychical experiences, (3), a psychology differing from our own.¹

(1). The prophet was an effective link between God and Israel. The current of divine revelation flowed because there was contact at both ends, contact provided by a character conspicuous for obedience to God, and for sympathy for man. The most important feature of prophetic consciousness was the possession of those qualities and characteristics which in all ages underlie communion with God and service to men.

(2). The presence of unusual or abnormal psychical characteristics may easily be misrepresented, or over-emphasised. The great prophets, who so profoundly transformed the religion of Israel, certainly were not men of unbalanced minds. However, the prophetic writings do indicate an intensity of psychical experience which distinguish the prophets from other men. There is a remarkable sense of external compulsion felt from the

1. Robinson, H. Wheeler, Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, p. 114.

'call' onward, often compelling the prophet to do that from which he naturally shrank-- a compulsion psychologically due to the vivid imagination, by which ideas in the prophetic mind acquired objective reality, independent of the prophet's own personality. "The Lord Yahweh hath spoken; who can but prophesy?",¹ said Amos. Isaiah declared "Yahweh spake thus to me, with strength of hand".² Jeremiah described the divine message as a 'burning fire' within him, which was irresistible.³ Sometimes, however, the message was not immediately forthcoming.⁴ It was in the form of a vision that Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel received their calls.⁵ Amos and Zechariah give part of their messages as sights actually presented to the eye. "Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me".⁶ Or, "I saw in the night".⁷ It is not so easy to show that the prophets believed that they actually heard external voices, but in the light of the experiences of present-day mystics, that the prophets had in mind something more than a dramatic figure of speech, when they used the phrase, "The voice of one, saying, Cry."⁸ The passionate dialogues between Jeremiah and Yahweh, are not simply literary fiction. In the case of Ezekiel, physical

1. Amos 3:8.

2. Isa. 8:11.

3. Jer. 20:9.

4. " 42:7

5. Isa. 6; Jer. 1; Ezek. 13.

6. Amos 7:1-9; 4.

7. Zech. 1:8 f.

8. Isa. 40:3.

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1. Amos 3:8.
 2. Isa. 6:11.
 3. Jer. 1:1-5:4.
 4. Ezech. 1:1-3:1.
 5. Isa. 40:3.

6. "The voice of one saying, cry".

phenomena are described which bear some resemblance at least to catalepsy: he remained dumb for seven days after his call; he was to lie in one position for a lengthy period; he was conscious of being transported from Babylon to Jerusalem, that he might describe what he saw in the temple, apparently during a trance state.¹

Such phenomena as these no more discredit the inner worth of the prophetic ideas than the eccentricities of genius in other lines, discredit its own high achievements. But they do suggest that the prophet was usually distinguished by a peculiar psychical development.

We must not emphasise unduly, the psychical abnormality.

As far as the historical result is concerned, this abnormality is a negligible feature. There is, even at this time, a half-unconscious recognition of the fact that revelation comes not as a voice out of the flame, or out of the cloud, but wells up out of the consciousness of the prophet, --- comes through the normal processes of men's minds. "Yahweh of hosts hath revealed himself in mine ears".² These facts enable us to understand the prophet's own conviction that he was set apart from other men. This conclusion finds measure of confirmation in the links that connect the

1. Ezek. 3:14:15; 4:4: 8,9. cf. Isa 21:1-10.

2. Isa. 22:14.

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2. Isa. 22:14.

prophecy of the eighth century with earlier ecstatic prophecy. Psychopathic features in the earlier prophets are unmistakeable, as when the madness of Saul is described by the same word as that used for prophesying,¹ or as when he is said to have been infected by the contagious influence of the prophets at Ramah.² The difference between the later and the earlier phases of prophecy in Israel, was that the abnormal was driven from the center to the circumference, and subordinated to that moral and spiritual message which became the prophet's dominating interest.

(3). "The third contribution to the prophetic consciousness, results from the characteristics of Hebrew psychology, in particular, its ideal of the Spirit of God. It is clear that a prophet's conception of his own personality, and its relation to God, must have profoundly affected his interpretation of religious experience. A modern believer in telepathy is ready to explain a given fact of consciousness, especially if it is of a striking nature, as due to the action of a mind other than his own. But this accessibility to influences other than those acting through the ordinary sense organs, was universally recognized by the Hebrews. The Hebrew doctrine of the Spirit of God, in fact, springs

1. I Sam. 18:10.

2. I Sam. 19:24.

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1. I Sam. 10:10.
2. I Sam. 10:27.

from the attribution of all such external influences to Yahweh as their source. Anything abnormal in the psychical life, would instinctively be referred to him. . . . " Given, then, the two features of the prophetic consciousness already indicated, the moral and spiritual character, and the sign and seal of some abnormal ~~psych~~ical experience, the general psychological atmosphere of the age, enables us to understand the prophet's 'Thus saith Yahweh!' so far as it can be understood on a purely scientific and ~~historical~~ level of inquiry. But such an analysis of the prophetic consciousness relates only to the subjective origin, not to the objective value of revelation. It professes to do no more than to show how the prophet of Israel could believe, in all sincerity, that the convictions of his own heart were really a message of God to His people. The fact that a modern mind would explain the origin of such convictions, and their psychical accompaniments, in a different way, by no means serves to invalidate the truth of this belief.

Psychological analysis of the prophetic^t consciousness, however successful, simply brings us to the threshold of the great philosophical problem --- The relation of human nature to the divine. Religious experience

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rests on the assurance that the relation is of such a kind that man can enjoy the fellowship of God, and that God draws near to man, in order to make fellowship possible. The prophetic consciousness is ultimately a peculiar variety of religious experience, dedicated to great ends, and having great historic results."¹

is a forth-teller; he proclaims, more than he predicts. He speaks to his own time more than to those of later centuries.

(3). The prophet is a 'Man of God' in the sense that his message stands the test of experience. The fundamental notes of the prophets are true to life's deepest needs.

The Hebrew prophets, therefore, were prophets in the sense that "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit of Yahweh".¹

1. Robinson, H. Wheeler, Religious Ideas of the Old Testament, p. 117-119.

1. 15 Peter 1:21.

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SUMMARY

In what sense is the prophet a 'man of God' ?

(1). In the sense that he is steeped in a God-life. As he is full of God, he speaks, fully of God.

(2). The prophet is conscious of a divine message. He is sure he is right, therefore he speaks with authority; he is a forth-teller; he proclaims, more than he predicts. He speaks to his own time more than to those of later centuries.

(3). The prophet is a 'man of God' in the sense that his message stands the test of experience. The fundamental notes of the prophets are true to life's deepest needs.

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1. II Peter 1:21.

SUMMARY

In what sense is the prophet a 'man of God'?

(1). In the sense that he is a messenger in a God-life. As he is full of God, he speaks, fully of God.

(2). The prophet is conscious of a divine message. He is sure he is right, therefore he speaks with authority; he is a forth-teller; he proclaims, more than he predicts. He speaks to his own time more than to those of later centuries.

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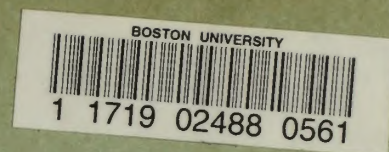
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